

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend at page 1, after the title, the following paragraph:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a continuation application of Application Serial No. 09/865,582, filed May 29, 2001. This application is related to and claims priority, under 35 U.S. C. § 119, from Japanese Patent Application Nos. 2000-158235 and No. 2001-117737, filed in the Japanese Patent Office on May 29, 2000 and April 17, 2001, respectively and the entire contents of the parent application and both Japanese patent applications are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

Please amend the paragraph at page 1, lines 21-26, as follows:

Recently, with the increase in the use of color images, a coated sheet having a superior smoothness has been widely used for sheets to be printed on in image forming apparatuses for obtaining a better image quality. The coated sheets tend to closely contact each other, either because of the smoothness of their surfaces or under the influence of humidity, in a sheet feeding part of image forming apparatuses, and thereby incomplete separation of the sheets occurs, resulting in double feeding of the sheets.

Please amend the paragraph at page 12, lines 5-12, as follows:

An uppermost sheet S of stacked sheet S' is fed into a nip part of the feed roller 1 and the friction pad 18 by the feed roller 1. When a plurality of the stacked sheets S' are fed into the nip, the stacked sheets S' are separated and fed one by one by differences in the friction coefficients between the feed roller 1 and the stacked sheet S', the coefficient of friction between the stacked sheets S', and the coefficient of friction between the uppermost sheet S ~~pf~~ of the stacked sheets S' and the friction pad 18. In this case also, when the contacting

force between the sheets of the stacked sheets S' is large, the sheets of the stacked sheets S' may be fed together.

Please amend the paragraph at page 12, line 27, to page 13, line 3, as follows:

Therefore, in the sheet feeding devices of ~~Fig~~ Figs. 1, 2, and 3, because the sheet S to be separated from other sheets to be fed is the uppermost one of the stacked sheet S', the feed roller 1 is cyclically pressed downward. In other words, the cyclic change in the pressure is provided by vertically oscillating either the shaft of the feed roller 1 or the shaft of the separation member (i.e., reverse roller 2). The term "cyclic" or "cyclically" as used herein means a constant repetition, and the cycle of pressing the feed roller 1 may be, for example, as indicated by a curve 22 of Fig. 17, which shape is in a sine curve and is different from that of a waveform 24 of vibration generated by a piezo-electric element. A good sheet loosening effect is obtained with the pressing cycle of a low frequency, for example, with a pressing cycle lower than about several hundreds Hz, preferably with the pressing cycle of about 40 Hz with the amplitude of about 0.1 mm, and thereby double feeding of the sheets S is avoided.